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**Comprehension Difficulties and Strategies in
Interpreting**

口译中理解的困难及策略

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SYNOPSIS

Interpreting can roughly be divided into two phases, namely, comprehension and reformulation. To interpret first and foremost is to comprehend the source language. However, interpreters are always confronted with all kinds of difficulties in order to fully comprehend the source language under time pressure. This thesis is an attempt to unveil the mystery of comprehension process, give a close look at those difficulties that interpreters come across and put forward some tentative suggestions as to how to achieve efficient comprehension in interpreting.

This thesis is composed of four chapters, excluding an introduction and a conclusion. Chapter One first gives an introduction to interpreting and then analyzes why comprehension is of such importance by comparing Xiada Model and Daniel Gile's interpreting model. Moreover, this chapter probes into comprehension process from psycholinguistic point of view. The explanation of four comprehension process lays foundation for the next chapter.

Chapter Two is an attempt to list difficulties that interpreters have to handle through the whole comprehension process. The author divides those difficulties into different levels. There are comprehension difficulty in listening, at word, sentence and discourse level and other ones.

Then, Chapter Three analyzes the requirements to achieve efficient comprehension in interpreting. Interpretation starts with listening and analyzing. The ability to listen and analyze is of fundamental importance for interpreters. Listening and Analysis in interpretation actually is a synthesized

process of bottom-up and top-down mechanisms. Context is quite essential in disambiguating the source input. Context can be divided into linguistic and non-linguistic context. They both play a fundamental role in comprehension during interpreting. During discourse comprehension, people constantly make all kinds of inferences and a special kind of inference—bridging inference is studied in this chapter. We identify missing links here or there in a discourse and we have to bridge them. Then the concept of schema is introduced because when people activate relevant schemata during comprehension, these schemata function as a tool to help people make inferences.

The last chapter attempts to provide some useful strategies (anticipation strategy and schema strategy) with illustrative examples for a general view of the issue. In this chapter, the author also gives some suggestions on what kind of exercises teachers could use when training students to interpret.

Key Words: comprehension process; comprehension difficulties; efficient comprehension; strategies

摘 要

口译大致可以分为两个阶段：理解阶段和表达阶段。要做好口译首先就要理解源语语言。但是，在理解过程中，口译员总是会面临各种各样的困难以致不能完全理解甚至误解发言者的意思。这篇论文试图揭开口译理解过程的神秘面纱，看清理解过程中到底会遇到何种困难并尝试提出一些建议帮助口译员达到口译中的有效理解。

论文除了引言和结论共分为四章。论文第一章主要介绍了口译的历史并利用口译的厦大模式和吉尔模式分析了为什么口译过程中理解如此重要。另外，在这章中，作者还从心理语言学的角度探讨了口译的理解过程。对这一过程的解释为文章奠定了基础。

第二章给出了口译员在理解过程中必须面对的困难。作者把这些困难分为不同的层次。它们主要分为听力理解困难，词语层次的理解困难，句子的理解困难和语篇层次的理解困难及其它。

接着，第三章分析了口译员达到有效理解的要求。口译始于听和分析，所以听和分析的能力对口译员来说尤为重要。听和分析的过程事实上是一个自上而下和自下而上的综合过程。语境对于解除源语的歧义至关重要。语境可以分为语言语境和非语言语境，它们对理解都起到重要作用。在语篇理解过程中，人们总是不断地做出推论。作者在本章中还分析了如何发现语义空缺并利用图式知识做出推论弥补空缺。因此，作者对图式的概念进行了介绍并指出弥补语义空缺的过程其实是一个激活图式知识并进行推理的过程。

最后一章作者试图提出一些对口译理解有帮助的理解策略（预测策略和图式策略）并给出一些说明问题的实例。作者还给出了一些练习，建议口译培训者如何训练学生并培养他们口译的有效理解能力。

关键词：理解过程；理解困难；有效理解；策略

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Introduction

Interpreting as a modern profession has established its important status in the international community in its short history. Nowadays, from top-ranking political talks to business negotiations, interpreters' intelligence and effort have become an indispensable part of all the international gatherings. With their talents and special skills, interpreters help people overcome language barriers, dispel their suspicion and serve as a bridge in intercultural communication.

However, the public at large are still not familiar with such an important and challenging profession and many people have misunderstandings toward interpreting. Therefore, to clarify the public misunderstandings and to introduce correct concepts and approaches to interpreting have become urgent.

Generally speaking, interpreting can be broken down to two phases: comprehension and reformulation. The current thesis will only focus on the first phase—comprehension. Comprehension here means understanding the source language message. It is the first stage of interpreting initiating the whole interpreting act and affecting a successful reconstruction effort. However, fully comprehension of the source language (SL) is not at all an easy task. It is always hindered by various difficulties lying ahead. The thesis then is an effort to identify those difficulties, analyze the reasons and put forward some tentative suggestions.

Attempting to do so, the author first identify why comprehension phase is so necessary and essential during interpreting, using the Xiada Model and Daniel Gile's Effort Model. Then she analyzes four process of comprehension from

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